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## Migrations and Spirituality in Europe A Catholic Voice Inspired by the Thought of Pope Francis

**Abstract:** Europe has been experiencing crisis caused by migrations, especially from Africa and the Middle East. This is not only an economic problem, but a cultural, social, and religious issue as well. Therefore, a proper approach to migration cannot overlook the broadly understood religiousness and spirituality. Rooted in the Christian experience, Europe cannot ignore the significant message of the Word of God and the teaching of the Church on migration and its various dimensions.

Thus, Catholics and other Christians are required to care for their own spirituality, create the culture of coming together that leads to peace, and stay open to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue which fosters exchange of spiritual gifts. Protection of family and support to integral development of human life are special areas where people can join forces and work together. This requires proper formation and being open to God's help.

**Keywords:** migration, spirituality, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, culture, multidimensional help

Increased migration<sup>1</sup> and the cultural, social, and religious clashes caused by it pose a major challenge to contemporary Europe. Work, human relations, daily lives and religious worship in new conditions are

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<sup>1</sup> In 2012, global migrant statistics were as follows: 105,670,000 Christians, 58,580,000 Muslims, 10,700,000 Hindus, 7,300,000 Buddhists, 3,660,000 Jews, 9,110,000 adherents of other religions, and 19,320,000 unaffiliated persons. See M. POMARAŃSKI: "Stan i perspektywy migracji religijnej w XXI wieku." *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 6(42) (2014) no. 4, pp. 150—151.

by no way easy to immigrants forced to build their lives anew.<sup>2</sup> At the same time they may cause trouble to the native population, whose lives may in a sense be disturbed by the arrival of new neighbours. However, openness and responsibility may in fact enrich both sides. Meeting people who have completely different religions and cultures is of course more difficult than contacts with representatives of a nation which follows the same, for example, Christian, tradition. That is why migration cannot be considered only in a political, social, or economic sense. It is worth to be looked at from the perspective of human religiousness and spirituality because an encounter of cultures may constitute a chance of reviving or awakening one's inner life. It is also valuable to look at the phenomenon as a sign of the times.

Before the basic relations between migration and religiousness (spirituality) can be determined, first the terms themselves must be defined, the facts must be established and the theological foundations of the Christian attitude to human migration need to be presented. By showing how these aspects are interrelated, we can define the prospects and challenges facing European Christians. The voice of the Catholic Church, the largest religious community in Europe, is particularly important here.<sup>3</sup> The contemporary Catholic way of looking at migration is inspired by the teachings of Pope Francis, who sees openness to the poor and the socially excluded, including migrants, as a priority of his pontificate and a sign of the Gospel being truly central to a person's life.

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<sup>2</sup> Emigration has positive and negative effects. The former include personal development, improvement of financial condition of families and popularising home country's culture (as is the case with Poles living in various parts of the world). The latter are migration shock, language barriers, uncertainty, alienation, lower social position, health problems, living in suspension between the native and the new country, family troubles, and problems with children in many cases resulting from conflicting values followed by the old and the new community. See J. DZIEDZIC: "Zjawisko migracji Polaków. Następstwa i duszpasterska rola Kościoła." *Polonia Sacra* 21(49) (2017) no. 4, pp. 41–47. Although migrations are in a way normal, there is some anthropological immorality in it. See J. GOCKO: "Istotne aspekty teologii migracji." *Teologia i Moralność* 12(21) (2017) no. 1, pp. 47–58.

<sup>3</sup> For more examples of Popes' teachings about migration and refugees in the 20th and 21st century, see R. CEKIERA: "Byłem przybyszem. Nauczanie papieskie w orędziach na Światowy Dzień Migranta i Uchodźcy." *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej* 2018, pp. 51–60; T. PIERONEK: "Stolica Apostolska wobec migracji i migrantów." In: *Migracje. Religie i Kościoły wobec migracji i migrantów*. Ed. J.E. ZAMOJSKI. Warszawa 2009, pp. 19–37.

## 1. Definitions and the reality of migration and spirituality (religiousness)

For a start, let us define the terms “migrations” and “spirituality” (or “religiousness”) and describe what they look like in contemporary Europe.

### 1.1. The reality of migration

Migrations are various forms of movement of people with the intentions of settling, permanently or temporarily, in a new location. The movement may be voluntary (due to economic reasons or personal desires) or involuntary (fleeing life-threatening conditions (refugees), especially armed conflicts). In most cases, people leave their home countries in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, injustice, exploitation and inequality,<sup>4</sup> in hope to overcome fears, escape persecution, find more humane living conditions,<sup>5</sup> and rather “be” than “have”, although the latter cannot be ignored. Many of them experience violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, and restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups.<sup>6</sup> There is also a growing environmental problem, as the areas where there is shortage of water and where the temperatures are rising, making life harder or even impossible. Migrations caused by these factors are by all means reasonable. Yet, as Pope Francis has reminded, such migrants are not recognised by international conventions as refugees.<sup>7</sup>

Search for a better world to live in is understandable. What is more, European countries, with their developed economies and higher living standards, seem a dream come true to poor people from Africa or Asia. However, the differences in attitudes to people, God, and principles of community life arouse controversies in many societies and cause tensions, especially in the context of terrorist activity. These difficulties, threats, and concerns cannot be ignored but should not be exaggerated either.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2016).

<sup>5</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2015).

<sup>6</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2014).

<sup>7</sup> FRANCIS: *Encyclical Letter Laudato si'*, n. 25.29—30.

<sup>8</sup> See J. WYSOKIŃSKI: *Zjawiska migracyjne jako potencjalne narzędzia wojny hybrydowej*. <http://rcb.gov.pl/zjawiska-migracyjne-jako-potencjalne-narzedzia-wojny-hybrydowej> [access: 3.07.2020].

The issue of migration itself needs not only spontaneous, but also structural solutions based on a thorough understanding of the reasons why people leave their homes and the alternatives for tackling urgent matters. The activity of selected structures or social groups (e.g. charities, parishes, or support centres) is not sufficient here. What is needed is a constructive and systematic response of states and international organisations,<sup>9</sup> taking into account the integrity of the life of individual people and the society. It is not right to take a purely economic approach. The “roots of identity,” the climate, family and social culture and religious life are also extremely important, not only for immigrants, but also for people living in the host countries. Therefore, the issue of migration needs to be tackled at many levels and with a responsible approach. That is why Francis unequivocally says: “the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities. In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.”<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2. Difficulties and fears

Migration is a challenge to the migrants themselves and to the societies which accept them. To people fleeing their homes, migration means a change to their traditional way of life, including religious life.<sup>11</sup> It is important to ensure that a change of the place of life and daily cul-

<sup>9</sup> See BENEDICT XVI: Encyclical Letter *Caritas in veritate*, n. 62.

<sup>10</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2018). “In migrants the Church has always contemplated the image of Christ who said, *I was a stranger and you made me welcome* (Mt 25.35). Their condition is, therefore, a challenge to the faith and love of believers, who are called on to heal the evils caused by migration and discover the plan God pursues through it even when caused by obvious injustices.” PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE: Instruction *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, n. 12.

<sup>11</sup> “Those who migrate are forced to change some of their most distinctive characteristics and, whether they like [it] or not, even those who welcome them are also forced to change. How can we experience these changes not as obstacles to genuine development, [but] rather as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth, a growth which respects and promotes those values which make us ever more humane and help us to live a balanced relationship with God, others and creation?” FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2016).

ture does not halt human development, especially if faced with difficulties in integration with the local communities. If this may be problematic to Europeans, who share the same Christian sources and similar cultures, it is all the more so to Muslims, whose culture is completely different.

Unfortunately, the brutal truth about migration makes it difficult to properly understand and solve the growing problem. Francis gives a right diagnosis in this respect: “They dream of a better future and they want to create the conditions for achieving it. [...] Other migrants are attracted by Western culture, sometimes with unrealistic expectations that expose them to grave disappointments. Unscrupulous traffickers [...] exploit the weakness of migrants, who too often experience violence, trafficking, psychological and physical abuse and untold sufferings on their journey.”<sup>12</sup> In this context an attitude of stable and richer countries, in particular those rooted in the Christian culture, whereby they would choose to close their borders to people experiencing real life-threatening dramas would be incomprehensible. As regards various legitimate fears, it is worth to realize that many of them arise because the people are not properly prepared for the encounter. It should be kept in mind though that a fear of encountering the other deprives a person of the opportunity to encounter God.<sup>13</sup> However, when Christians choose to serve the others, they will recognise Jesus and discover that they in fact serve the Lord.<sup>14</sup> This has a significant spiritual value, as it leads to a true discovery of Jesus Christ.<sup>15</sup> The Church has a major task to perform then — to educate the believers so that they understand the need to help migrants in the spirit of the Gospel. The programme may be summed up as follows: *to know in order to understand; to be close in order to serve; to be reconciled, we need to listen; to grow, it is necessary to share; to be involved in order to promote; to cooperate in order to build.*<sup>16</sup>

Pope Francis indicates that “refugees and people fleeing from their homes challenge individuals and communities, and their traditional ways of life; at times they upset the cultural and social horizons which they encounter. Increasingly, the victims of violence and poverty, leaving

<sup>12</sup> FRANCIS: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit* (further: CV), n. 91—92.

<sup>13</sup> FRANCIS: *Homily at Mass for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* [14.01.2018]. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180114\\_omelia-giornata-migrante.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180114_omelia-giornata-migrante.html) [access: 6.07.2020].

<sup>14</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2020).

<sup>15</sup> “Even though our eyes find it hard to recognise him: his clothing in tatters, his feet dirty, his face disfigured, his body wounded, his tongue unable to speak our language.” FRANCIS: *Homily in Sacrofano* [15.02.2019].

<sup>16</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2020).



their homelands, are exploited by human traffickers during their journey towards the dream of a better future.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, terror and any forms of violence towards host communities are of course dangerous. The acts of violence sweeping across Europe and perpetrated by Islamic fundamentalists, coupled with the emergence of closed Muslim neighbourhoods in cities, make it more difficult for people of various cultures to co-exist and properly integrate. It should still be remembered that terrorism cannot be considered the face of Islam, as “authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.”<sup>18</sup> However, concerns persist about public safety, a risk of losing one’s own identity, culture and job opportunities, and an increase in crime. Therefore, breaking the stereotypes and overcoming rejection remain major challenges.<sup>19</sup> Focused on these problems, some Europeans seem to misunderstand Pope Francis’ call for a willing acceptance of Muslim immigrants and accuse him of acting to the detriment of the Church and Christian culture. When speaking about openness to newcomers, Francis in fact also calls for freedom of worship for Christians in Islamic countries<sup>20</sup> and respect for religious leaders and places of worship<sup>21</sup>; as regards Christians in Muslim countries, Francis emphasises that the baptised living in those

<sup>17</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2016).

<sup>18</sup> FRANCIS: Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* [further: EG], n. 253. “[...] religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion. This is done for the purpose of achieving objectives that are political, economic, worldly and short-sighted.” *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco\\_20190204\\_documento-fratellanza-umana.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html) [access: 2.07.2020].

<sup>19</sup> See FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2014).

<sup>20</sup> “We Christians should embrace with affection and respect Muslim immigrants to our countries in the same way that we hope and ask to be received and respected in countries of Islamic tradition. I ask and I humbly entreat those countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence” (EG n. 253).

<sup>21</sup> FRANCIS: *Message to Muslims throughout the World for the end of Ramadan* (*‘Id Al-Fitr*) [10.07.2013]. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130710\\_musulmani-ramadan.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130710_musulmani-ramadan.html) [access: 30 June 2020].

societies should be aware of their heritage.<sup>22</sup> This is a Christian point of view — to call for openness to those in need and to boldly demand respect for Christians' rights and dignity.

Seen from a different perspective, migration is difficult because the people have numerous wounds inflicted in various tragic situations, and it makes them seriously question the meaning of life. The new environment, culture so different from what they know, and being rooted out of their natural place intensify the unresolved issues, for example, concerning personal relations, financial liabilities, or emotional injuries. Alienation hinders effective resolution of personal difficulties. For immigrants from Africa or Asia, the difficulty is even more severe. And this is where evangelisation may happen. It is important to hear the voice of the baptised, who should go out to the peripheries of their lives and find the picture of Christ in the people in need (including migrants). That is why Francis reminds us that “Jesus is already there, in the hearts of our brothers and sisters, in their wounded flesh, in their troubles and in their profound desolation. He is already there.”<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the societies which accept migrants and other poor people should see it as an opportunity to restore their truly Christian life, show their humanitarianism and oppose the increasing globalisation of indifference and utilitarianism.<sup>24</sup>

Keeping this evangelical message in mind, the Church should serve “especially [...] those fleeing from war, violence, political or religious persecution, from natural disasters including those caused by climate change, and from extreme poverty. Many of [these people] are young.”<sup>25</sup> It is therefore necessary to give hope and support the creation of proper life prospects in the changed conditions. This task appears all the more significant in the light of the tragic statistics for people who went missing or drowned in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>26</sup> European Christians cannot remain indifferent to that. Francis' words spoken on Lampedusa sound dramatic in this context: “The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleet-

<sup>22</sup> FRANCIS: *Meeting with the Authorities of the Kingdom of Jordan*. Address. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140524\\_terra-santa-autorita-amman.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140524_terra-santa-autorita-amman.html) [access: 1.07.2020].

<sup>23</sup> FRANCIS: Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* [further: GE], n. 135.

<sup>24</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2019).

<sup>25</sup> CV 91. “The Church is at your side as you seek a more dignified life for yourselves and your families.” — *Homily of Holy Father Francis* [8.07.2013]. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130708\\_omelia-lampedusa.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html) [access: 1.07.2020].

<sup>26</sup> *Operational portal. Refugee situations*. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean> [access: 10.07. 2020].



ing and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn't affect me; it doesn't concern me; it's none of my business!"<sup>27</sup>

### 1.3. Spirituality and religiousness — evaluation attempt

Let us now move on to spirituality and religiousness. Spirituality is "an ability shown by a man as a rational and free being to overcome oneself. [...] To avoid fatal misunderstandings, it is important to ensure that the term 'spirituality' is always accompanied by a proper adjective."<sup>28</sup> In Christianity, spirituality should be seen as a life led by the baptised in the Holy Spirit (inner life), which makes it totally different from the Muslim or a Far Eastern spirituality. There can even exist an atheist (non-theistic) spirituality, understood as a set of deeper existential attitudes.<sup>29</sup> Piety or religiosity, on the other hand, should be defined as a set of religious practices, "a person's religious feeling and inner attitude, filled with confidence and prayer, towards God."<sup>30</sup>

Religiousness is an important element of many people's lives. It does not only comprise a reference to the Absolute, but can also shape personality, behaviour, relations with other people, and forms of social functioning.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, religiousness shapes the culture of a community,

<sup>27</sup> FRANCIS: *Homily* [8.07.2013]. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130708\\_omelia-lampedusa.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html) [access: 9.07.2020].

<sup>28</sup> M. CHMIELEWSKI: *Wielka Księga Duchowości Katolickiej*. Kraków 2015, p. 10. Cf. M. CHMIELEWSKI: "Duchowość." In: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej*. Ed. M. CHMIELEWSKI. Lublin—Kraków 2002, pp. 226—227; H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologiczny*. Trans. T. MIESZKOWSKI, P. PACHCIAREK. Warsaw 2005, p. 78; J.A. WISEMAN: *Historia duchowości chrześcijańskiej*. Trans. A. WOJTASIK. Kraków 2009, pp. 21—25.

<sup>29</sup> For more information on non-theistic spirituality, see A. COMTE-SPONVILLE: *Duchowość ateistyczna. Wprowadzenie do duchowości bez Boga*. Trans. E. ADUSZKIEWICZ. Warszawa 2011.

<sup>30</sup> H. VORGRIMLER: *Nowy leksykon teologiczny...*, p. 269. Piety is an "external manifestation of Christian spirituality, a proper religious and spiritual attitude of a Christian towards the Triune God, other people, himself and the world..." M. CHMIELEWSKI: "Pobożność." In: *Leksykon duchowości katolickiej...*, p. 641.

<sup>31</sup> See P. STAWIŃSKI: "Migracje a religia. Wybrane aspekty." *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Śląskiej* 2018, pp. 179—182.

which can be clearly seen in every part of Europe (churches, religious symbols). Religiousness is a manifestation of a person's inner life. Therefore, omitting this sphere of life in the context of migration would not be a right thing to do. The role of religion and religious culture is even more evident when a person leaves his or her home country and does not have a natural community and integrating factors around them. In the case of migrants the religious sphere takes over that function, even if it lacks much spiritual depth. However, there may be a risk of creating a ghetto mentality, which does not help either integration or a growth in faith.

No analysis of spirituality in Europe can ignore statistics.<sup>32</sup> These are not optimistic for the continent. The number of religious believers has been steadily falling. For instance, over the last two decades the percentage of population which describes itself as belonging to a religion went down from 81% to 70% in Portugal, from 54% to 44% in Austria, and from 32% to 22% in Norway; a mere 2% increase was reported in Romania, Croatia, Slovakia, Luxembourg, and Estonia, and a 1% rise was seen in Hungary and Lithuania. The most secular countries (i.e. with the largest proportion of atheists) are France (40%), the Czech Republic, Sweden, the Netherlands (over 30%), Estonia, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Slovenia, and the UK (over 25%). Another (even more significant) factor is the percentage of people who regard religion as a value which has an influence on their lives. For the European Union, it is only 6%. However, to diagnose the spiritual (religious) condition of Europe, we need to determine the percentage of people following religious practices. Unfortunately, there is a downward trend in Sunday church attendance figures all over Europe. A mere 13.5% of European believers attend religious practices once a week, 11% once a month, 25.9% attend selected festive services, and 7% go to church once a year. A serious decline was reported by Ireland — while in the 1980s 90% of Irish Catholics attended the Holy Mass once a week, nowadays the proportion is less than 30%. However, special occasions such as baptism, wedding or funeral are still relatively important, although not connected with deeper spiritual experience. The countries mentioned above are also chosen by Muslim immigrants, who sometimes practise their religion in radical ways, as their destinations. This poses a real challenge to Europe.

An analysis of the data may lead to the conclusion that religion is in decline among Europeans,<sup>33</sup> which translates into what they think

<sup>32</sup> *Religijność w Europie*. <https://gosc.pl/doc/2095874.Religijnosc-w-Europie> [access: 9.07.2020].

<sup>33</sup> Poland, with the highest proportion of faith practitioners among European countries, stands out in the European religious landscape. In 2018, 386,000 people were baptised, nearly 300,000 received the sacrament of confirmation, 400,000 children

and do. Because of lack of religious practices and little real reference to the spiritual sphere in their everyday lives, Europeans assess various phenomena and take various decisions keeping in mind human aspects only, and this narrows proper perception of reality. The above is true also about migration. On the other hand, migrations of practising believers (whether Christians or Muslims) to secular countries may actually encourage the people living there to at least think about religious issues. However, without the local Church's involvement it will be impossible to create religious needs, which are a springboard for proper spiritual search, not to mention practising of faith.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Catholic viewpoint on migration

Migration and the spirituality issues accompanying it must be viewed from the Christian perspective rooted in the Word of God and the resulting teaching of the Church and theology. Nowadays, it is very important to hear the voice of Pope Francis, who gives specific starting points for Christians to understand migration and act to solve the growing problem.

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received their First Communion, and 133,000 couples were sacramentally married. However, the rate of Sunday church attendance is 38.2% and the proportion of Catholics receiving Holy Communion is 17.3%. There is also a growing involvement of the laity in Church life, although in 2013 the proportion was only 8.1%. 88% of students attend religious education lessons. The figures show the need to revive faith and find ways to reach the non-practising majority. There are plenty Catholic communities and movements and the new evangelisation at various (including nationwide) levels is robust. However, some dangerous tendencies also exist. For example, the so-called churching and weekend leisure lifestyle that break the bonds with local parishes. In addition, a growing radicalisation of attitudes can be seen, especially those referring to the Latin tradition and questioning the theology and practice of the Church after the Second Vatican Council. See INSTYTUT STATYSTYKI KOŚCIOŁA KATOLICKIEGO SAC: *Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae in Polonia AD 2020*, Warsaw 2020. [http://www.iskk.pl/images/stories/Instytut/dokumenty/Annuario\\_Statisticum\\_2020\\_07.01.pdf](http://www.iskk.pl/images/stories/Instytut/dokumenty/Annuario_Statisticum_2020_07.01.pdf) [access: 6.07.2020].

<sup>34</sup> P. BIELIŃSKI: *Religijność w Europie*. <https://www.niedziela.pl/arttykul/10660/Religijnosc-w-Europie> [access: 6.07.2020].

## 2.1. Message of the Word of God

A biblical starting point to understand the man is the fact that every man is created by God in the image of himself (cf. Gen 1.26—27). This is the basis of human brotherhood, which requires that other people, also from other cultures, should be treated as brothers and sisters. At the same time, as Francis notes, an encounter is an opportunity given by God to build a better world.<sup>35</sup> In the Jewish tradition, respect for migrants follows from the chosen nation's own experience: "You will not molest or oppress aliens, for you yourselves were once aliens in Egypt" (Ex 22.20); "If you have resident aliens in your country, you will not molest them. You will treat resident aliens as though they were native-born and love them as yourself — for you yourselves were once aliens in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God" (Lev 19.33—34); "Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, and sheltering the homeless poor; if you see someone lacking clothes, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own kin?" (Is 58.7).<sup>36</sup> It is these passages that Francis refers to when emphasising that acts towards those in need are indications of good life and spirituality.<sup>37</sup> He notes that also when he quotes St. Thomas Aquinas, who said that "mercy, whereby we supply others' defects, is a sacrifice more acceptable to him, as con-  
ducting more directly to our neighbour's well-being."<sup>38</sup>

Not only the Old Testament shows what attitude towards migration to take. Jesus, Mary and Joseph also experienced rejection — Mary "gave birth to her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Lk 2.7) — and even had to flee (migrate) because of the threat from Herod (Mt 2.13—14). Repatriation was experienced by Jesus since the Holy Family settled in Nazareth (Mt 3.13—17).<sup>39</sup> It is no surprise then that in the newcomers one should see Christ himself, who says to the Church: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev 3.20), so "welcoming others means

<sup>35</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2014).

<sup>36</sup> "Other texts of significance here say: Not everyone should be brought into your house, for many are the snares of the crafty" (Sir 11.29); "Admit strangers into your home, and they will stir up trouble and make you a stranger to your own family" (Sir 11.34); "If you do good, know for whom you are doing it and your kindness will have its effect" (Sir 12.1).

<sup>37</sup> See GE n. 103—104.

<sup>38</sup> GE 106; THOMAS AQUINAS: *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 30, a. 4, ad. 1.

<sup>39</sup> See CV n. 24.

welcoming God in person!”<sup>40</sup> Eventually, it is help to those who need it, including migrants, that becomes a test of whether you live according to the Gospel, following the teaching of Jesus: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25.35—36). Many Catholic communities, parishes and organisations are experiencing this evangelical standard. For example, the Community of Sant’Egidio and numerous other volunteers of charities have the experience of recognising Jesus in the sufferers and immigrants. They indicate the necessity to receive strangers with respect and solidarity.<sup>41</sup> That is why Francis does not refrain from openly speaking about Christ being close to migrants and other poor people: “Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognized in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches.”<sup>42</sup> Jesus clearly identified himself with the small and needy. Receiving them is receiving the Saviour himself then: “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me” (Mk 9.37; Mt 18.5; Lk 9.48; Jn 13.20).<sup>43</sup>

The Christian attitude to migration is also shaped by the apostolic teaching. The universality of the Church, composed of the baptised of various cultures and languages, is rooted in the shared experience of the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup> St. Paul said: “there can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither slave nor freeman, there can be neither male nor female — for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Ga 3.28). The paradigm of help to the needy is shown in the parable of the good Samaritan (see Lk 10.30a—34). In the context of the dying and suffering migrants, the words of Jesus gain significant meaning — the man beaten by brigands was taken care of by a Samaritan, not a priest or Levite, who served God and knew the Law.

<sup>40</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2016).

<sup>41</sup> See FRANCIS: *Message for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2015).

<sup>42</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>43</sup> See FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2017).

<sup>44</sup> “We were baptised into one body in a single Spirit, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as free men, and we were all given the same Spirit to drink” (1 Cor 12.13).

## 2.2. Theological foundation: unity and universality of the Church

The Church's attitude to migration movements is also built upon theological reflection, both in the dogmatic and pastoral dimension. Its basis is the kerygmatic message of God's love. Francis notes that "God's love is meant to reach out to each and every person. Those who welcome the Father's embrace, for their part, become so many other open arms and embraces, enabling every person to feel loved like a child and 'at home' as part of the one human family."<sup>45</sup> God's merciful action was shown by Jesus and those who accept that become the Father's embrace so that every man could experience the love and unity with the entire human family.<sup>46</sup>

Speaking of migrations, one cannot focus on Muslims only, but also on Christians from different countries. The openness of European Christians, especially Catholics, should be based on the universality of the Church. Francis says that "wherever we go, even to the smallest parish in the most remote corner of this earth, there is the one Church. We are at home, we are in the family, and we are among brothers and sisters. [...] The Church is one for us all. There is not one Church for Europeans, one for Africans, one for Americans, one for Asians, and one for those who live in Oceania."<sup>47</sup> Faith is one because God is one,<sup>48</sup> and the Church is universal, in the sense that it embraces all times and is open to all cultures, nations, and societies. This assumes multidimensional diversity, which is not against unity but — in fact — grows on it. The harmony is created by the Holy Spirit. Making everything uniform prevents openness the God's actions and is a negation of Catholicism.<sup>49</sup> It is important that

<sup>45</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2016).

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*). Ed. G. VIGINI. Trans. K. STOPA. Częstochowa 2014, pp. 41—42.

<sup>48</sup> "Faith is *one*, in the first place, because of the oneness of the God who is known and confessed. All the articles of faith speak of God; they are ways to know him and his works. Consequently, their unity is far superior to any possible construct of human reason. They possess a unity which enriches us because it is given to us and makes us one." FRANCIS: Encyclical Letter *Lumen fidei*, n. 47.

<sup>49</sup> See FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia*. (*The Church of Mercy*), pp. 55—57. "The Holy Spirit would appear to create disorder in the Church, since he brings the diversity of charisms and its gifts; yet all this, by his working, is a great source of wealth, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of unity, which does not mean uniformity, but which leads everything back to harmony. In the church, it is the Holy Spirit who creates harmony. [...] the Holy Spirit himself is harmony." Ibidem, p. 74.



diversity should not be created by us but accepted as a gift of the Holy Spirit. However, when “we demand diversity and close ourselves up in what makes us different and other, we bring division. When we are the ones who want to build unity in accordance with our human plans, we end up creating uniformity, standardization”<sup>50</sup>; that would be against the logic of the Incarnation of the Word.<sup>51</sup>

The universality, which underpins the nature of the Church, shapes its identity. Therefore, the Church should be a community without borders, a mother to all people. The openness to others does not mean losing oneself and one’s heritage or trying to create a new syncretic environment; it is rather a manifestation of love of neighbour. Cultural syntheses which shape contemporary societies are possible and valuable then.<sup>52</sup> At the same time, it must still be remembered that by its nature the Gospel is enculturated, transforming a particular culture by God’s action — “the Holy Spirit adorns the Church, showing her new aspects of revelation and giving her a new face.”<sup>53</sup>

## 2.3. Spiritual foundation: mercy

One of the basic categories of Christianity is mercy, or “the divine attitude which embraces; it is God’s giving himself to us, accepting us, and bowing to forgive.”<sup>54</sup> It was fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who

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<sup>50</sup> EG 131. “Our unity is not primarily a fruit of our own consensus or of the democracy in the Church, or of our effort to get along with each other; rather, it comes from the One who creates unity in diversity, because the Holy Spirit is harmony and always creates harmony in the Church. And harmonious unity in the many different cultures, languages, and ways of thinking. The Holy Spirit is the mover.” FRANCIS: *General audience, 25 September 2013*, [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130925\\_udienza-generale.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130925_udienza-generale.html) [access: 30.07.2020].

<sup>51</sup> See EG n. 117.

<sup>52</sup> “Migrants present a particular challenge for me, since I am the pastor of a Church without frontiers, a Church which considers herself mother to all. For this reason, I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis. How beautiful are those cities which overcome paralysing mistrust, integrate those who are different and make this very integration a new factor of development! How attractive are those cities which, even in their architectural design, are full of spaces which connect, relate and favour the recognition of others!” (EG n. 210).

<sup>53</sup> EG n. 116.

<sup>54</sup> FRANCIS: *Miłosierdzie to imię Boga. Rozmowa z Andream Torniellim (The name of God is Mercy. A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli)*. Trans. J. GANOBIS. Kraków 2016,

himself was poor and remained close to the poor. Christians should follow Jesus' lead and care for the excluded and neglected. As Francis emphasises, God wants to use Christians to serve the poor, not on an *ad hoc* basis but through regular work aimed at restoring freedom and dignity to them and include them in the social life.<sup>55</sup> This is how the baptised fulfil God's will. The option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, philosophical or sociological one.<sup>56</sup>

Mercy covers a broad sphere of human life. On the one hand, it implies offering material help to the poor and needy. But it also refers to everything that marks human existence wounded by "violence, abuse, the distance from family affection, traumatic events, flight from home, uncertainty about the future in refugee camps. These all are elements that dehumanise and must spur every Christian and the whole community to practical concern."<sup>57</sup> Taking all this into consideration, Pope Francis clearly states that mercy is "the beating heart of the Gospel."<sup>58</sup> So, "globalisation of love and compassion" is a Christian response to the "globalisation of migration." It creates a truly humane prospect of social life.<sup>59</sup>

### 3. Prospects and challenges

Relying on the Christian attitude to migration, we should identify the specific prospects and challenges facing contemporary Europe and the Church, taking into account the spiritual and religious spheres of human life.

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p. 27. Benedict XVI teaches that "also in the sphere of culture Christianity must offer the greatest power of renewal and ennoblement, the Love of God which becomes human love." *Message from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People on the occasion of the 31st World Tourism Day (2011)* "Tourism Linking Cultures" [http://emigracja.chrystusowcy.pl/dokumenty-kościola/oredzie-papieskiej-rady-ds-duszpasterstwa-migrantow-i-podrozujacych-na-xxxi-swiatowy-dzien-turystyki-2011-r-turystyka-a-zblizenie-kultur\(2\)](http://emigracja.chrystusowcy.pl/dokumenty-kościola/oredzie-papieskiej-rady-ds-duszpasterstwa-migrantow-i-podrozujacych-na-xxxi-swiatowy-dzien-turystyki-2011-r-turystyka-a-zblizenie-kultur(2)) [access: 7.07.2020].

<sup>55</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia. (The Church of Mercy)*, p. 37.

<sup>56</sup> Ibidem, p. 39.

<sup>57</sup> Ibidem, p. 142.

<sup>58</sup> FRANCIS: *Bull Misericordiae Vultus*, n. 12.

<sup>59</sup> See FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)*.

### 3.1. Culture of coming together and peace

The first challenge is to link anthropology and spirituality by creating a culture of coming together. Francis notes that the Church's task is to assist people in the transition from closure, marginalisation and exclusion to encounter and eventually a more brotherly world.<sup>60</sup> This is contrary to many tendencies, as "in many circles and generally in the economised society imposed on us in the world the culture of exclusion, a throwaway culture, prevails."<sup>61</sup> Thus, the exclusion and closure need to be overcome. Francis says that believers should reach out to every person, including the one who has different opinions or follows a different religion.<sup>62</sup> Acting in this spirit, the Pope and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, launched a joint appeal to promote the culture of dialogue and coming together, even if it is difficult.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> See *ibidem*. "In this context of pastoral vision for the Church, Pope Francis's idea of human beings in relation to society is embedded. His distinctive emphasis runs parallel to and interacts with the rest. His strong and direct speech shakes consciences to strike the 'hardened' heart of a society whose heart is not open to the idea of coming together for the common good. These are the premises for a neighbourly and peaceful existence." G. VIGINI: *Przedmowa (Preface)*. In: FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia. (The Church of Mercy)*, pp. 7–8.

<sup>61</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia. (The Church of Mercy)*, p. 89.

<sup>62</sup> See *Ibidem*, pp. 136–137. A practical manifestation can be found in one of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus, which sees the necessity to work for the excluded and refugees. A service to the unity and providing help are rooted in the experience of relation with God and are a part of the Christian testimony. "We see the gap between rich and poor widen across the world and we hear weekly reports of hundreds perishing as they try to reach a new home. Political leaders have kindled hatred and erected walls between rich and poor, young and old, those at home and those who have to migrate. The reality of children who have been abused, physically or sexually, is also painfully and personally present to us. [...] In all our work, we want to unite people where they are separated, to heal them where they are wounded. We want to work collaboratively in this field hospital of our world, witnessing to a faith that promotes reconciliation based on justice. We want to bring hope to our world, to imagine new roads and to walk these roads to the end." <https://www.jezuici.pl/preferencje-apostolskie/kroczy-razem-z-wykluczonymi> [access: 30.07.2020]. What is necessary is the ability to listen and the readiness to be asked by a neighbour. See: *Message from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People...*

<sup>63</sup> "In the name of God and of everything stated thus far; Al-Azhar al-Sharif and the Muslims of the East and West, together with the Catholic Church and the Catholics of the East and West, declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard." *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*.

The culture of coming together is first needed within the Church itself, which should be seen as a unity in diversity, or a true communion. A Christian life must feature a progressive openness. That is why Francis notes that “the language of the Gospel, is the language of communion which invites us to get the better of closedness and indifference, division and antagonization.”<sup>64</sup>

The culture of coming together is also crucial for properly shaping the society. It is not enough to aid only. What is necessary is also to accompany and protect. *Ad hoc* support is just a starting point, after which finding a job, including in social life and fostering cultural activity are needed. All this can help a person live with dignity on their own. Therefore, the society should protect the poor, weaker, and refugees. And the service cannot be assigned to a small group of people only. The Church’s involvement in the cause must encompass its various areas, such as parishes, Catholic movements, and associations and religious institutes.<sup>65</sup>

The value of the culture of coming together should therefore be an indispensable element of philosophical and theological studies as well as the work of ecclesiastical universities and theological faculties at state universities. The studies are expected to reflect the contemporary social and cultural contexts, including those generated by migrations, which are part of the concerns shared by contemporary people. In this way, the mission of the outbound Church (*la Chiesa in uscita*) can be conducted. This has a material influence on the experience of a “mystique” of living together, or fraternity, including with the poor and left neglected.<sup>66</sup> Such an attitude is a necessity of the times. The earth must be discovered as our common home and this discovery can impact the attempts to build a common world. This is not to opt for a kind of syncretism whatsoever, but rather for reconciled diversity and transformation of the arising conflicts into a new quality of unity.<sup>67</sup>

One more observation — it is the Holy Spirit that prepares the hearts of believers to open and be ready to encounter other people; at the same time, it heals various injuries and disputes so that we may overcome our differences rooted in language, culture, or religion.<sup>68</sup>

The encounter produces peace. A true peace is not rooted in the human activity but rather in religious experience. Francis openly says:

<sup>64</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), p. 114.

<sup>65</sup> Ibidem, pp. 40, 144—148.

<sup>66</sup> FRANCIS: Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*, n. 1—2.4.

<sup>67</sup> Ibidem, 4d.

<sup>68</sup> FRANCIS: *Homily* (International Stadium, Amman) [24.05.2014]. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco\\_20140524\\_terra-santa-omelia-amman.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140524_terra-santa-omelia-amman.html) [access: 1.07.2020].

“A religious leader is always a man or a woman of peace, as the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depth of the religious traditions that we represent.”<sup>69</sup> Here the Pope speaks about healthy religiosity of course, based on love and search of the truth. It must be remembered that this is in opposition to the attitudes shown by some groups which proclaim adherence to religious values and at the same time spread destruction and even terror. Their way of thinking follows from limitations and being closed to dialogue. That is why openness to the neighbour, a dialogue, agreement, and eventually peace remain a challenge.<sup>70</sup> Peace will not prevail but for respect of religious freedom, and this is connected with respect of the spiritual experience of individual people and whole social groups. Peace may come from an authentic encounter with people, and this requires not only words but also gestures. A striking example here is the teaching and actions of Pope Francis, who points out that Islam also worships one and living God and emphasises the importance of prayer. As an authority figure, he stood up for refugees on Lampedusa, and when celebrating the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Great Thursday on 28th of March 2013 in the Casal del Marmo prison for minors he washed the feet of a Muslim woman, replicating the gesture of Christ, who humbled himself in human misery. In this way, he gave an unequivocal spiritual and evangelic justification to the help to people in need and those who are excluded.

### 3.2. Supporting life

The spirituality of believers manifests itself also in the care for life, which is a clear link between Christians and Muslims. Thus the first and foremost area where joint efforts may be taken is the family. Referring to Benedict XVI’s words that the family is “a place and resource of the culture of life and a factor for the integration of values,”<sup>71</sup> Francis calls for support to the integration and reunifying families whose members live apart because of migration.<sup>72</sup> Solving these difficult issues may help many people live better lives, which translates into deeper spiritual life.

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<sup>69</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia (The Church of Mercy)*, p.167.

<sup>70</sup> Ibidem, pp. 167—169.

<sup>71</sup> BENEDICT XVI: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2007)*.

<sup>72</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2018)*.

Care for life does not boil down to respect for the family only but encompasses support to all dimensions of life — including the needs of the excluded, poor and migrants. Thus, Francis says that “we are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them, and to embrace the mysterious wisdom that God wishes to share with us through them.”<sup>73</sup> This is a task for everybody, but especially the shepherds of the Church.<sup>74</sup> For Christians themselves, the aid they should offer migrants and other people who need it is an opportunity to get out of their comfortable lives, overcome their personal limitations and fears and see their life as a gift for others. At an interreligious meeting during his apostolic journey to Azerbaijan Pope said that “opening ourselves to others does not lead to impoverishment, but rather enrichment, because it enables us to be more human: to recognize ourselves as participants in a greater collectiveness and to understand our life as a gift for others; to see as the goal, not our own interests, but rather the good of humanity.”<sup>75</sup>

Protecting life also means giving hope, and hope is a key matter for refugees and displaced people. It is expressed in “expectations for the future, in the desire for friendship, in the wish to participate in the host society also through learning the language, access to employment and the education of children.”<sup>76</sup> Help is a manifestation of God’s goodness and commandment of love.<sup>77</sup> All this can support human growth.

### 3.3. Care for inner and religious life

The issue of migration includes the question of religiousness, because humans develop also in reference to God. Therefore, the Church is responsible for the spiritual life of believers, including migrants.<sup>78</sup> This is very

<sup>73</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), p. 40.

<sup>74</sup> “Let your hearts be so big that they could accept all the women and all the men whom you will encounter during the day and whom you will look for when you set off on the journey in your parishes and every community.” Ibidem, p. 118.

<sup>75</sup> FRANCIS: Address. “Heydar Aliyev” Mosque — Baku (2 October 2016).

<sup>76</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), p.142.

<sup>77</sup> Ibidem, p. 143.

<sup>78</sup> In the Polish context, the idea was cogently expressed by archbishop Szczepan Wesoły, a long-time delegate of the Polish Bishops’ Conference for the pastoral care of Polish emigrants: “Church in emigration needs to work to support and maintain the faith of Polish emigrants and try to bring back those who lost their faith.” Sz. WESOŁY: *Czy potrzebny jest kościelny protektor emigracji?* <http://wiedz.com.pl/>



clearly seen with respect to Christian refugees and emigrants. It also requires that Catholics in host countries have the courage to keep their minds and hearts open. Francis notes that they “needs special pastoral care that would respect their traditions and accompany them in harmonious integration in the church realities they have found themselves in. Let our Christian communities be true places of hospitality, listening and communion.”<sup>79</sup> This is especially important in the case of young people, who should be protected against abuse and other illegal activity. Therefore, social integration of children and teenage migrants must be strengthened.<sup>80</sup>

Francis stresses that it is not enough to satisfy physical hunger only, as the hunger for happiness, dignity, human development, family, integral education, health and safety is the deepest craving. Relation with God, leading to full life, is the foundation.<sup>81</sup> Being rooted in the Lord is the power of church communities and grows through prayer and community life.<sup>82</sup>

As mentioned above, the issue of migration cannot be seen as migration of Muslims only. Christian families are also forced to leave their home places. Therefore, the Church should offer them proper pastoral care. At the same time, it should not neglect serving persons who remained in their home countries and suffer from the separation from their loved ones. The care should in particular be provided to families of Christians who are persecuted, especially in the Middle East.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, being uprooted from their own life and spiritual culture seems especially difficult to young people, regardless of what religion they follow. Therefore, the Church should particularly support integration processes.<sup>84</sup> While obviously not being easy, this task seems necessary, given the growing migrations in our times.

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wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Szczepan-Wesoły.jpg <http://wiedz.com.pl/2018/08/29/czy-potrzebny-jest-koscielny-protektor-emigracji/> [access: 1.07.2020].

<sup>79</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), pp.143—144.

<sup>80</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2017).

<sup>81</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), pp. 164—167. “Promoting essentially means a determined effort to ensure that all migrants and refugees — as well as the communities which welcome them — are empowered to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions which constitute the humanity intended by the Creator.” FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2018).

<sup>82</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2017).

<sup>83</sup> See FRANCIS: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*, n. 46. “The persecution of Christians and ethnic and religious minorities in many parts of the world, especially in the Middle East, are a great trial not only for the Church but also the entire international community. Every effort should be encouraged, even in a practical way, to assist families and Christian communities to remain in their native lands.” Ibidem.

<sup>84</sup> See CV n. 93.

### 3.4. Ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and mutual enrichment

The Second Vatican Council directed the Church onto an ecumenical dialogue to bring Christians belonging to various denominations closer together and onto an interreligious dialogue aimed at getting the Christians to know one another better and work together in matters important to people.

Thus, in the first place migrations point to the need for ecumenical efforts. The cooperation between different Christian communities brings to life Jesus' prayer for unity of His followers, and the pursuit of unity fosters the credibility of the Evangelical message. Since life is a joint pilgrimage to one God, the Church has a major task of supporting people in unity on the way, so that everybody could discover the truth and good.<sup>85</sup> Migration movements among European nations are another motivation for ecumenical approach. They create situations where cooperation and helping each other are necessary. A good example here is the lending of churches and other buildings to Christian minorities to carry out their pastoral care activities.<sup>86</sup>

Another area is the interreligious dialogue. Pope Francis continues the process to bring Catholics and people from other religious traditions closer together. This is in line with the necessary dialogues taking place in the world now<sup>87</sup>; the dialogues concern life, social peace, acceptance of others. Contrary to what some people say, the dialogue the Pope is talking about is not a way to syncretism. There is a difference between a dialogue and arguing. Francis says that syncretism would be a form of religious totalitarianism.<sup>88</sup> We cannot overlook the differences in how we understand God and relations with Him, where we place Jesus and what controversies we see in the use of violence.<sup>89</sup> However, a dialogue is necessary. This attitude comes from the heart and is expressed through visible gestures. Acting in this spirit, Pope Francis hosted a joint prayer meeting with Israel's Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, welcomed King of Jordan's efforts to promote peaceful

<sup>85</sup> EG n. 244—246.

<sup>86</sup> Such situations take place with Polish immigrants in various European countries and with Ukrainians in Poland.

<sup>87</sup> EG n. 238.

<sup>88</sup> EG n. 250—251.

<sup>89</sup> See A. WĄS: "Papież Franciszek wobec islamu. Nowe akcenty w dialogu z muzułmanami?" In: *O co chodzi w ekumenizmie? Czym jest dialog? Podstawowe idee Vaticanum II pół wieku później*. Ed. M. KITA. Kraków 2015, pp. 180—183.

coexistence of various religions in his country, or during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, met with Muhammad Ahmad Hussein, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine. Very meaningful were also Pope's words about a good dialogue in Albania, where Catholics, Orthodox Christians, and Muslims live in peace. When visiting the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey, Pope asked Grand Mufti Rahmi Yaran to join him in prayer.

For Francis, the culture of interreligious dialogue depends on the spiritual formation of the clergy, who act as points of reference to believers. He spoke about it during his meeting with Mehmet Görmez, head of Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* he straightforwardly says: "In order to sustain dialogue with Islam, suitable training is essential for all involved, not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs."<sup>90</sup>

It must also be noted that societies should care for unity, which is not only an effect of negotiation but a gift of the Holy Spirit, with whom individual people (and social groups) choose to work. This leads to reconciled diversity, which drives the growth of countries and societies.<sup>91</sup> Francis profoundly opposes seeing these processes as a way to ostensibly destroy one's own identity. An encounter with other people may lead to acceptance of what is valuable in the neighbour. This is obviously a long process but it is worth taking care of as it leads to discovering the numerous gifts that people received from God.<sup>92</sup> For European Christians, this is a calling for opening their hearts to God, developing their prayer lives and caring for strengthening their Christian identity. On the other hand, migrations create opportunities for the new evangelisation, with the entire cultural heritage of the Church supporting the process.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> EG n. 253.

<sup>91</sup> "Our ethnic diversity is our wealth... It is only in unity, through conversion of hearts and reconciliation, that we will be able to help our country to develop on all levels" (EG n. 230).

<sup>92</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2018). JOHN PAUL II: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2005). "Dialogue does not mean renouncing one's own identity when it goes against another's, nor does it mean compromising Christian faith and morals." FRANCIS: *Address to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue* [28.11.2013]. [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/november/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131128\\_pc-dialogo-interreligioso.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/november/documents/papa-francesco_20131128_pc-dialogo-interreligioso.html) [access: 2.07.2020].

<sup>93</sup> Message from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People...

## 4. Conclusions

The foregoing considerations lead us to a number of conclusions:

- a) Migration is a phenomenon that should be looked at from various perspectives, not only the economic or social ones. Francis reminds us that the Church is called to recognise God's intentions in migration in line with the biblical message that the Christian community includes people of all languages (see Rev 7.9).<sup>94</sup> The Church in a given country should see migrations of Christians from other parts of the world as an opportunity to inspire and enrich its spiritual heritage. Encounters with practising Muslims on the other hand may encourage Christians to reflect on their own religious zeal. Faced by the migration crisis and the concerns raised, we may express a conclusion that what we should fear of the most is a weak condition of the European Christianity rather than a strong religious engagement of Islam's followers.
- b) Christians can truly open their hearts to people who need support, are excluded or come from other cultures if they work with the Holy Spirit, who makes them ready to serve others and thus become a sign of the kingdom of God.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, it should be remembered that the openness (including to novelties) must take into account that some solutions may prove unsuccessful and involves the risk of failure. Nevertheless, as Francis said, "it is better to have a Church that is wounded but out in the streets than a Church that is sick because it is closed in on itself."<sup>96</sup>
- c) The Church should serve unity, not only among Catholics, but all Christians and other people in various dimensions of the social life.
- d) In the contexts of broadly understood spirituality (and religiousness), migrations pose specific challenges — to care for the culture of coming together and the peace that comes from it, to respect life (especially family life), and to care for development of internal life. It is also necessary to hold ecumenical and interreligious dialogue to lead people to become culturally and religiously enriched while keeping one's own identity.

<sup>94</sup> FRANCIS: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (2017).

<sup>95</sup> "May the Holy Spirit help us to contribute actively and selflessly to making justice and a dignified life not simply clichés but a concrete commitment of those who seek to bear witness to the presence of God's Kingdom." FRANCIS: Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*, n. 19.

<sup>96</sup> FRANCIS: *Kościół miłosierdzia* (*The Church of Mercy*), p. 34.

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PRZEMYSŁAW SAWA

## Migrazioni e spiritualità in Europa. Voce cattolica ispirata al pensiero di Papa Francesco

### Abstract

L'Europa sta attraversando una crisi a causa della migrazione, soprattutto di persone provenienti dall'Africa e dal Medio Oriente. Questo non è solo un problema economico, ma un problema profondamente culturale, sociale e religioso. Pertanto, il giusto approccio per risolvere la questione della migrazione non può ignorare l'elemento della religiosità e della spiritualità ampiamente comprese. L'Europa, radicata nell'esperienza cristiana, non deve quindi ignorare il messaggio essenziale della Parola di Dio e l'insegnamento della Chiesa riguardo alla migrazione e alle sue diverse dimensioni. Pertanto, soprattutto i cattolici e gli altri cristiani si trovano ad affrontare il compito di curare la propria spiritualità, creare una cultura dell'incontro che porti alla pace, l'apertura al dialogo ecumenico e interreligioso legato allo scambio dei doni spirituali. Uno spazio speciale per la cooperazione è l'assistenza nella custodia della famiglia e nello sviluppo integrale della vita umana. Ciò richiede una formazione adeguata e l'apertura all'aiuto di Dio.

**Parole chiave:** migrazione, spiritualità, ecumenismo, dialogo interreligioso, cultura, aiuto multidimensionale

PRZEMYSŁAW SAWA

## Migrations et spiritualité en Europe. Voix catholique inspirée par la pensée du pape François

### Résumé

L'Europe connaît une crise due aux migrations, notamment des personnes d'origine d'Afrique et du Moyen-Orient. Ce n'est pas seulement un problème économique, mais un problème profondément culturel, social et religieux. Par conséquent, une juste approche pour résoudre la question de la migration ne peut pas ignorer l'élément de religiosité et de spiritualité largement comprises. L'Europe, enracinée dans l'expérience chrétienne, ne doit donc pas ignorer le message essentiel de la Parole de Dieu et de l'enseignement de l'Église concernant la migration et ses différentes dimensions. C'est pourquoi en particulier les catholiques et les autres chrétiens sont confrontés à la tâche de prendre soin de leur propre spiritualité, de créer une culture de rencontre conduisant à la paix, à l'ouverture au dialogue œcuménique et interreligieux lié à l'échange de dons spirituels. Un espace spécial de coopération est l'aide à la protection de la famille et au développement intégral de la vie humaine. Cela demande une formation appropriée et une ouverture à l'aide de Dieu.

**Mots-clés:** migration, spiritualité, œcuménisme, dialogue interreligieux, culture, aide multidimensionnelle